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Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 20. Humanitarian assistance

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

2. Regulation 3.11 provides, *inter alia*, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the intergovernmental organs or international conferences since the adoption of the plan.

3. The revisions proposed below modify paragraphs 20.1 to 20.10 and 20.14 of programme 20, Humanitarian assistance, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/219 of 18 December 1996 and issued in document A/51/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1.

4. The revisions reflect the decisions of the General Assembly in its resolutions 52/12 A of 12 November and B of 19 December 1997, on the reform relating to humanitarian assistance proposed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), and resolutions 52/220 and 52/221 of 22 December 1997 on the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

5. There is no specialized intergovernmental or expert body responsible for reviewing the revisions proposed under this programme.

A. Programme

Paragraphs 20.1 to 20.3

Replace paragraphs 20.1 to 20.3 with the following:

"20.1 The legislative authority for the programme derives from General Assembly resolutions 46/182, 52/12 B, 52/168 and 52/220 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/33. The

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programme is under the responsibility of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"20.2 The overall orientation of the programme is to ensure the timely, coherent and coordinated response of the international community to disasters and emergencies; to promote natural disaster reduction in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; to facilitate the elaboration of policies to guide the work of the humanitarian community and the smooth transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development; and to advocate humanitarian principles and concerns.

"20.3 During the period covered by the plan, the focus will be on three core functions, which will be significantly strengthened:

"(a) Policy development and coordination functions in support of the Secretary-General, ensuring that all humanitarian issues, including those which fall between gaps in existing mandates of agencies, such as protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, are addressed. In that connection, liaison will be maintained with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Group and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

"(b) Advocacy of humanitarian issues with political organs and relevant humanitarian partners and actors;

"(c) Coordination of humanitarian emergency response, ensuring that appropriate response mechanisms are established on the ground following consultations in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee."

B. Subprogrammes

Subprogramme 20.1 Policy and analysis

Paragraph 20.4 *Replace* paragraph 20.4 with the following:

"20.4 The objectives of the subprogramme, for which the Policy and Analysis Branch of the Policy, Advocacy and Information Division is responsible, are as follows:

"(a) to develop and coordinate United Nations system policies on humanitarian issues and to advocate humanitarian norms and policies;

"(b) To promote the formulation and/or refinement of policy on access to and protection of victims of conflict; United Nations system responsibilities for internally displaced persons; the humanitarian interface with peacekeeping operations; security for humanitarian staff and supplies in conflict situations; linkages and transition from relief to reconstruction and rehabilitation; and other humanitarian issues that fall between gaps in existing mandates of agencies;

"(c) To strengthen future humanitarian operations by promoting the application of lessons learned from the evaluation of the coordination of past humanitarian assistance operations;

"(d) To advocate humanitarian issues with political organs and relevant humanitarian partners and actors;

"(e) To fulfil the responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator regarding humanitarian mine-clearance activities."

Subprogramme 20.2 Complex emergencies

Paragraph 20.5 *Replace* paragraph 20.5 with the following:

"20.5 The subprogramme, under the responsibility of the Complex Emergency Response and Consolidated Appeal Process Branch in Geneva and the Emergency Liaison Branch in New York, focuses on two areas, pre-emergency operations and new complex emergencies."

Paragraph 20.6 *Delete* subparagraph (d) and *renumber* the subsequent subparagraph accordingly.

Paragraph 20.7 *Insert* a new subparagraph (b) as follows:

"(b) Establishment, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, of an appropriate response mechanism on the ground to coordinate humanitarian emergency action;"

and *renumber* the subsequent subparagraphs accordingly.

Replace the text of existing subparagraph (d) (new subparagraph (e)) with the following:

"(e) Refinement of the consolidated appeal process as an instrument for programming as well as for resource mobilization for a specific emergency to enhance development of a humanitarian strategy that supports allocation of responsibilities, requests for resources and transition towards rehabilitation and reconstruction, in accordance with relevant legislative mandates;".

Subprogramme 20.3 Natural disaster reduction

Paragraphs 20.8 to 20.10 *Replace* paragraphs 20.8 to 20.10 with the following:

"20.8 The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, in particular its Plan of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/22 A, calls for reducing the vulnerability of populations at risk from natural disasters and similar emergencies through the integration of disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation into development planning at the local, regional and national levels. While the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/236 is coming to an end in 1999, the need for a continuation in

the future of a concerted and coordinated international effort to prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate the damage caused by natural disasters has been recognized by the Assembly in its resolutions 51/185 and 52/200.

"20.9 Subject to the outcome of the end of the Decade review to be carried by the General Assembly, the objectives of the subprogramme, which would be pursued with a coordinated and concerted inter-agency approach, would be to promote:

"(a) The integration of disaster reduction strategies into the national development processes of those countries most significantly affected by natural and similar hazards;

"(b) The mobilization of the international community for policy commitment and coordination of the international efforts for disaster reduction practices, including through the appropriate application of science and technology at the country and regional levels;

"(c) A concerted international framework for improvements in early warning capacities for natural and similar disasters, through shared knowledge and transfer of technology;

"(d) Public awareness and information programmes related to natural disasters, as an integral element of United Nations support for social and economic development programmes."

Subprogramme 20.5 Humanitarian emergency information

Paragraph 20.14 *Replace* the words "Information Management and External Relations Branch" with "Information Management Services Branch".

Replace subparagraph (a) with the following:

"(a) The first objective is to put in place an effective emergency information network system for preventive action, contingency planning and a timely, consistent and proactive response. To that effect, present arrangements for collection, analysis and dissemination of emergency information within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will be strengthened. This will include further integration of the Humanitarian Early Warning System, the Integrated Regional Information Networks, and ReliefWeb".

C. Legislative mandates

Subprogramme 20.1 Policy and analysis

Add reference to the following resolutions:

General Assembly resolutions

52/12 A and B Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform

52/168 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

52/171 Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

52/220 Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Economic and Social Council resolution

1996/33 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Subprogramme 20.2 Complex emergencies

Add reference to the following resolutions:

General Assembly resolutions

52/169 Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

52/172 Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

52/211 A Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan and the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Economic and Social Council resolution

1996/33 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Subprogramme 20.3 Natural disaster reduction

Add reference to the following resolutions:

General Assembly resolutions

51/185 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

52/200 International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

Economic and Social Council resolution

1996/45 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

Subprogramme 20.4 Disaster relief

Add reference to the following resolutions:

General Assembly resolution

52/168 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Economic and Social Council resolution

1996/33 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Subprogramme 20.5 Humanitarian emergency information

Add reference to the following resolutions:

General Assembly resolutions

51/185 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

52/168 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

52/172 Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

52/200 International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon